GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:206
ANSWERED ON:04.08.2003
DNA TESTS FOR CHECKING WILDLIFE CRIMES
BHASKAR RAO PATIL;SHYAMA SINGH

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to check wildlife crimes with DNA tests;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a number of wildlife crimes committed in the past few years remain unresolved; and

(d) if so, to what extent the DNA tests will put a check on wildlife crimes ?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 206 DUE FOR REF ON 4th AUGUST 2003 REGARDING DNA TESTS FOR CHECKING WILDLIFE CRIMES

(a) & (b) In order to investigate wildlife crimes, Government has created a data base of DNA signatures of 1755 known animal species so far. The comparison of signatures of the unidentified sample with the signatures of known animal species available in the data base establishes the identity of the sample beyond a reasonable doubt.
(c) & (d) The wildlife offence cases registered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, inter-alia, include cases of deliberate fire, illegal entry into protected areas with weapon, destruction of habitat, hunting of wild animals, illegal trade in wild or captive animals, illegal manufacture and sale of animal articles and trophies. Offence cases that cannot be compounded take a long time to resolve due to investigations and judicial procedures. At any point of time, a substantial number of offence cases remain subjudice. The cases pertaining to hunting of animals and illegal trade in wild animals, their parts and products require foolproof evidence for establishing the identity of biological samples. DNA based approach is a useful tool to establish, beyond doubt, the identity of the species and is also an effective device in controlling the illegal trade in wild animals, their parts and products.